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Mr. Michael Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Docket No. 02-55

Dear Chairman Powell:

I would like to bring to your attention an important issue that profoundly impacts Arlington County, the state of Virginia, and our country as a whole. The issue is public safety radio interference -a problem in desperate need of a solution. Public safety communications systems and commercial wireless operations are located on adjacent and intermingled channels in the 800 MHz spectrum band. The problem: the technologies used by public safety and commercial wireless are incompatible with one another as neighbors. The result: dangerous interference, which causes garbled communications and prevents public safety officials from doing their jobs.

There is a plan currently under consideration at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that realigns the current jumbled licensing of 800 MHz systems into separate blocks of spectrum for public safety and cellular wireless carriers. This plan will virtually eliminate public safety interference, provide additional spectrum to public safety and offer a future platform for communications networks that are needed to protect our communities all at no cost to Washington residents or the American taxpayer.

The plan is known as the Consensus Plan and is the only proactive and comprehensive solution to this dangerous problem. Implementing the Consensus Plan would not cost taxpayers a single dollar. As a public safety professional, I urge you to join me and many of my colleagues in supporting this solution.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward P. Plaughter
Fire Chief

Cc: Commissioner Kathleen Abemathy
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kevin Martin

The mission of the Arlington County Fire Department is to provide essential emergency and non-emergency services.

We are a quality organization dedicated to answering the needs of the Community with highly skilled people who care. We are committed to eliminating threats to life safely and property through education, prevention, and effective response to fire, medical and environmental emergencies. We will achieve our mission through teamwork, professionalism and a commitment to the people we serve.